

Practice Procedures

American Academy of Pediatrics

1. Identification of Children with Special Health Care Needs within practice

- Flag child's record.
- Identify primary office contact person for family.
- Develop receptionist priority list of CYSHCN to assist in routing and triaging of telephone calls.

2. Scheduling

- Develop guidelines for average length of visit for CYSHCN.
 - Initial visit
 - Acute illness visits
 - Routine follow-up visits
- Coordinate scheduling of appointments if child or family must see multiple professionals within the practice.
- Coordinate scheduling of diagnostic tests and reporting with child's appointment, and document it on his/her flow sheet.
- Inform families in advance of all documentation and information required for a visit.
- Develop a single, family-friendly form that families can use in all areas of the practice to access services.
- Remind family to send knowledgeable and responsible person(s) to appointment

3. Telephone and triage management

- Provide training and information for all office staff interfacing with CYSHCN and their families, including:
 - Telephone courtesy
 - Confidentiality
 - Basic office information, eg, hours of operation, after hours access
- Phone message slips used in the office should be inclusive of the needs from families of CYSHCN.
- Develop systems for communication with families who do not speak or read English (i.e provide translator, have appropriate forms and resources translated).

4. Billing and Financial Assistance

- Provide training for office personnel responsible for interface among practice, payers, and families that includes information regarding:
 - Specific plan benefits
 - Preapproval mechanisms for referrals, hospitalization, diagnostic testing
 - Communication systems with case managers at health plans
 - Process for dealing with payment denials
 - Options and schedules for payment available to meet the needs of families within the practice
- Develop resource guide to assist families to understand and access financial services and resources at the local, state, and national levels.

5. Personnel Issues

- Staff recruitment
 - Ensure that all job descriptions reflect the practice's mission statement, which includes providing quality care to CYSHCN.
 - Identify skills necessary for each employee to support practice's mission statement.
 - Include questions in the employment interview to assess candidate's experience working with children and families and as a member of a team, effective communication and interpersonal skills, sensitivity to key elements of family-centered care, and respect for cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity.
- Staff orientation and ongoing education
 - Provide educational opportunities to support all staff in acquiring family-centered, culturally competent knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
 - Provide educational opportunities for staff regarding community resources, services, and programs to support CYSHCN and their families.
- Assessment of skills and behaviors that demonstrate employee's ability to practice family-centered care are included in yearly performance review and reward process.

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6. Support for Continuity of Care

- Provide tools that assist families to manage health care information.
- Provide families with educational materials and services to support their role as decision-makers and caretakers.
 - Provide educational services and resources in a format, reading level, and language appropriate for all families.
 - Provide educational services and resources for children that is at an appropriate developmental level.
 - Support continuing education experiences to ensure proficiency in technical skills.
 - Provide education and information in a variety of formats, eg, written materials, videos, bulleting boards, and magazines such as Exceptional Parent.
- Develop a system for provider-to-provider communication of pertinent information about CYSHCN to facilitate cross-coverage and communication with other health care professionals, especially outside of office hours.
- Develop documentation systems to coordinate information about the child and family (eg, list of health care and service providers) that:
 - Sets agenda for practice visits (agenda-setting tool)
 - Ensures development and maintenance of care plan.
 - Tracks next steps needed in the care of CYSHCN (next steps needed form).
- Initiate communication with specialty and community-based providers. Use standardized format to facilitate consistent and easily identifiable communication of information.
- Develop system (letter or form) for communication with school setting.

